

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3360

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FOR DEPUTY ASST SECY DUBS FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, APER, CE

SUBJ: COLOMBO STAFFING PATTERN

REF: STATE 18314; COLOMBO 307; STATE 35175 AND
114126

1. AS YOU MAY RECALL, IN LIGHT OF MESSAGE TO ME FROM ROY ATHERTON EXPRESSING URGENT NEED OF NEA TO REDISTRIBUTE FIELD POSITIONS TO MEET PRESSING PERSIAN GULF REQUIREMENTS I RELUCTANTLY AGREED IN EARLY FEBRUARY TO THE ABOLITION OF ONE OF OUR FOUR SUBSTANTIVE OFFICER POSITIONS (POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL POSITIONS TAKEN TOGETHER). WE HAVE GIVEN THIS NEW STAFFING PATTERN A TRIAL RUN CUSHIONED SOMEWHAT BY THE EXTENSION OF THE TOUR OF ED BRYNN UNTIL AUGUST.

2. BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE TO DATE, AND CONSIDERING THE CURRENT AND ANTICIPATED DEMANDS UPON US OVER THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, I AM FORCED TO CONCLUDE THAT THE LOSS OF THE FOURTH SUBSTANTIVE POSITION PLACES AN EXTREMELY HEAVY BURDEN UPON US AND REDUCES THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE POST.

3. INCREASING USG INTERESTS IN MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE WITH THE THIRD WORLD, AS EXEMPLIFIED
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MOST RECENTLY BY THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOWING UP THE

SECRETARY'S UN SPECIAL SESSION PROPOSALS, MAKE CLEAR TO ME THE NEED FOR MORE RESIDENT EXPERTISE IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD. NOT ONLY IS THERE A NEED FOR US TO ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS OF KEY ECONOMIC ISSUES WITH A WIDE SPECTRUM OF CEYLON-SE OFFICIALS AND OPINION-MOLDERS, BUT WE SHOULD BE GIVING INCREASING ATTENTION TO REPORTING IN THIS FIELD.

4. FURTHERMORE, THE GROWING PACE OF INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS AMONG THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WILL CLIMAX FOR THIS POST ELEVEN MONTHS FROM NOW WITH THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE OF AUGUST 1976. I AM CERTAIN THAT THE EXPERIENCE IN COVERING SUCH MEETINGS, INCLUDING THE JUST-CONCLUDED NON-ALIGNED MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN LIMA, WILL HAVE UNDERSCORED HOW DIFFICULT IT IS FOR A POST OF THIS SIZE TO KEEP UP WITH THE MYRIAD VIEWPOINTS AND DEVELOPMENTS AMONG OVER 80 DELEGATIONS AND SEVERAL THOUSAND VISITORS. CAREFUL PREPARATION WITH POTENTIAL HOST COUNTRY CONTACTS WILL BE REQUIRED DURING THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE CONFERENCE AND WE WILL ALSO NEED TO DEEPEN OUR LIAISON WITH THE RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF COUNTRIES WHICH WILL BE PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE.

5. FOR THESE REASONS, I WOULD LIKE TO INQUIRE SPECIFICALLY AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR HAVING REINSTATED ONE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITION AT THE O-4/O-5 LEVEL. SUCH A POSITION SHOULD BE FILLED BY AN OFFICER WITH PREVIOUS ECONOMIC TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE. I WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE YOUR LOOKING INTO THIS POSSIBILITY WITH THE HOPE THAT THE POSITION CAN BE RE-ESTABLISHED AND A QUALIFIED OFFICER ASSIGNED TO COLOMBO WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.
VAN HOLLEN

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